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ABSTRACT

This document describes the work of a teacher training institute sponsored by the Kent State Pan-African Studies Department and the Council of Independent Black Institutions and held at Kent State University on July 7-18, 1986. The underlying concept was that a new generation of African-American youth must be developed. These young people must be capable of decision-making that will positively affect family, community, nation, and world. The participants were trained to see education as a human act which fosters liberation. Speakers at the institute called for the following reforms: (1) the replacement of black teachers who have left teaching; (2) the declaration of a national state of emergency for African-Americans to prevent more from becoming members of the underclass; (3) changes in the world economic order; (4) "liberation education," which focuses on black culture and history; (5) the creation of more black independent institutions; and (6) preparation of minority youth for the technologically sophisticated, capital intensive economy of the future. (VM)

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LIBERATION EDUCATION

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A special Teacher Training Institute was sponsored by The Kent State Pan-African Studies Department, College of Education and Council of Independent Black Institutions, at Kent State University, July 7-July 18, 1986. The two week Training Institute provided training to teachers, administrators, parents and individuals interested in developing a new generation of African-American youth capable of decision-making that would positively effect family, community, nation and world. Those who attended the training were representative of public and private schools from Ohio and other major American cities.

The Council of Independent Black Institutions Teacher Training Institute was the first national Teacher Training Institute in Ohio; and Dr. Ed. Crosby, Director of The Pan-African Studies Department at Kent State University is to be commended for bringing together such a wealth of national resources for providing training, discussion and lectures on the educational process/ideology necessary for developing African-American youth.

The thrust of The Institute can be summarized as follows:

> Education is an act; it is not a resolution. It is an event, not a description of it. It is the struggle, not the preparation for it. It combines thinking, feeling, and acting into a single whole. It is a human act. It respects the learner and frees the teacher to learn. It is a people-

building, family-building, community-building, and a nation-building act--or else it is indoctrination, brainwashing, domination and westernization. It places the major responsibility for learning on the learner,himself. It vests the teacher with the skill to foster liberation, but not the skill to control. It is a human loving act between two people whose common destinies are bound together...

The working sessions during the two weeks with presenters such as Dr. Asa Hilliard, Dr. Kofi Lomotey, Professor Ron Daniels, Dr. O. C. Daniels, Hannibal Afrik, Dr. R. Temu and S. Madhubuti, were excellent. Some of the issues raised outside of the technical skill development areas of curriculum, methodologies and theories of child development, were needs assessment of the African-American child (intelligence and achievement testing) and education and politics.

One of the highlights of the conference was a keynote address by Dr. Asa Hilliard, III, distinguished Calloway Professor of Education, Georgia State University, and former Dean of Education, San Francisco State College. Dr. Hilliard, an expert on standardized testing and Renaissance Man who has made major contributions in the area of Egyptology, provided a lecture on Liberation Education. He opened his presentation with a statement, "that there has been a loss of 1/4 or 50,000 Black teachers since 1980." He predicts by 1990, 1/2 of the Black teachers teaching in 1980

will be lost and not replaced.

Such statistics are representative of W. E. B.DuBois 1960 prophecy, which was as follows:

> "Take, for instance, the current problem of the education of our children. By the Law of The Land today, they should be admitted to the (White) public schools. If and when they are admitted to these schools. . . . .Negro teachers will become rarer and in many cases will disappear. Negro children will be. . . . .taught under unpleasant, if not discouraging, circumstances. Even more largely than today, they will fall out of school, cease to enter High School, and fewer and fewer will go to college. Theoretically, Negro universities will disappear. Negro History will be taught less or not at all and. . . . .Negroes will remember their White or Indian ancestors and quite forget their Negro forebearers. . . . .Long before the year 2000, there will be no school segregation on the basis of Race. The deficiency in knowledge of Negro History and Culture, however, will remain and this danger must be met or else American Negroes will disappear. Their history and culture will be lost. Their connection with the rising African world will be impossible."

Dr. Hilliard's reference to fifty-four percent (54%) of African-American males existing outside of the economy

responds to the frequently asked question, how is the African-American family doing? The condition of the African-American male which predicates the African-American family evidences not only a particular, but a wider societal dilemma that will change the lives and standard of living of all Americans in the future. The reference to such a dilemma was revealed by Dr. Hilliard in his remarks concerning a section of the recently published Carnegie Report on Education. A section entitled A Changing World Economy was the heart of the educational report; this section presented the real issue or crisis concerning the future as being economic in nature. In summary, the section as reported by Dr. Hilliard, states, "The world economy is in a state of profound transformation." The world-wide economic transformation positions the United States as controlling know-how with Japan breathing down its back and the rest of the world providing labor for production at the expense of its own workers. The transformation also reflects a world where technology and capital can be moved anywhere in a matter of a short period of time; and a world in which multi-national corporations are world corporations whose only motivation and interest is creating world-wide markets and profits. Predicated on such circumstances, The Carnegie Report presents a future in which the United States must be prepared to accept world-wage levels and be prepared for massive decline in standards of living.

Such an economic analysis substantiates what has been presented by Sidney Wilhelm, Who Needs The Negro? and Samuel

Yette, The Choice: The Issue of Black Survival in America in their prophetic early 1970's publications. The thesis of both publications was the question of African-American survival.

The escalation of conditions presented by both authors and the substantiation of such economic conditions by The Carnegie Report warrants the need today for a national state of emergency in Black America. The declaration of such a state was echoed by Dr. Hilliard, "We are living the most dangerous period since our presence in America." Economic disengagement besets African-Americans. The evolution of unemployment and racism with the assistance of technology has created a permanent underclass. African-Americans, as a population, swell the ranks of the underclass. The underclass, a significant increasing segment of the population, has been written of as obsolete and useless. Unemployment, as documented in The Choice and Who Needs The Negro? is not a new experience for African-Americans; but what is new is the nature of the unemployment. In terms of the world-wide economic transformation, joblessness loses the peculiar quality of being a mere transitory moment that will fade upon the resumption of economic prosperity. The new world order and split-second transfer of technology and capital are indicators that the future for African-Americans, in particular, will be one of the permanent workless years even as the economy establishes new productive records and profits. Our fate is no longer tied into an economy in high

gear; displacement rather than unemployment spells the difference. Both poverty and joblessness exist, not outside the economic system as aberrations that come and go when recessions and depressions come and go, but instead, as fundamental aspects of an ongoing economic order custom designed to maximize investment returns from the new world-order and technology.

Liberation Education as referred to by Dr. Hilliard involves preparation for the future and the changing world-order. Preparation begins with an understanding of the following dynamics of domination:

* Memory and history destroyed
* Culture and way of life destroyed
* Destruction of identity (group identity)
* Socialization process taken away
* Destruction of group's ability to collect resources

Many of us do not understand that History and Culture serves political and economic functions; and that national unity is tied to a belief system and culture. Culture is a cohesive force. It is what keeps people together. Culture is very important, because many people have fought against their oppressors yet maintained the culture of their oppressors, and culturally, they are the same as their oppressors. Many of us came out of the Sixties and exist in the Eighties reflecting such conditions via an enslaved way-of-life. Liberation Education, also, is creating our own institutions. We cannot expect public schools to provide our children with

a liberating education. The Catholics and Jews understand this and have created their own institutions to provide what public institutions aren't capable or suppose to provide. The Council of Independent Black Institutions understands and accepts the challenge of providing a Liberation Education and nurturing those much needed generations of African-American youth.

The small numbers (ten individuals) from the Cleveland area that attended the Teacher Training Institute are to be commended for taking a giant step in the right direction. Hopefully, Cleveland, as other major African-American urban areas such as Detroit, Chicago, Washington, New York City, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia; will prepare for tomorrow by creating a school that is affiliated with The Council of Independent Black Institutions. The only thing we have to lose is our children! And, it is obvious relative to the conditions of The Cleveland Public Schools, from the Board Room to the classroom, we are in trouble. It is also evident by the reaction and responses of our children concerning the WDMT "Power" billboard controversey--we are in trouble. Our abdication as parents, families and a community reflect lost generations of African-American youth who lack understanding of God, self and History. For the first time in a century, a generation of African-Americans will not surpass the educational or social attainment of the generation that spawned it. We as adults have failed our children and created walking time bombs, whose minds are externally

controlled.

A recent report by Franklin A. Thomas, President of The Ford Foundation, entitled The New Demographics was presented on March 26, 1986, at the Annual Dinner of The Joint Center For Political Studies in Washington, D. C.; the thesis of the report was a shrinking youth population. The changes in the youth population are complex, but their direction and magnitude were revealed in a few simple facts presented by Mr. Thomas:

* After a period of sustained growth, the nation's youth population is shrinking. Between 1975 and 1995, the number of young people aged sixteen to twenty-four is expected to decline from thirty-five million to twenty-nine million or from twenty-three percent (23%) to fifteen percent (15%) of the population.
* This smaller youth cohort will consist increasingly of African-American and Hispanic youngsters. In 1950 less than fifteen percent (15%) of those eighteen and under were African-American and Hispanic; today, the figure is thirty-six percent (36%) and growing.
* The new demographics show that African-Americans, who currently make up eleven percent (11%) of the work force, will account for almost one-fifth of all labor-force entrants in the years ahead. The Nation will have fewer youngsters than in the

past, and more of them will be Black and Brown. These facts have important implications for nearly all of the major institutions, among them The Military and The Social Security System. The Nation's rapidly aging White middle class will draw its retirement income from an increasingly African-American and Hispanic work force. The Nation's defense will depend increasingly on Blacks and Browns in uniform.

The implications of the new demographics are profound and challenging. The future reflects an ever increasing technologically sophisticated, capital intensive economy. The void between the have and have-nots continues to expand. The economic transformation alluded to in The Carnegie Report by Dr. Hilliard and the economic disengagement/permanent underclass referred to by Samuel Yette and Sidney Wilhelm all evidence displacement and a jobless future. What is being turned out by The Public Schools, the decline in African-American students attending institutions of higher education, the demise of historical Black colleges, the shrinking pool of African-American elementary and secondary school teachers (African-Americans make up twelve percent (12%) of the total teaching force; it is estimated by 1990 they will constitute only five percent (5%), and the potential impact of competency testing of teachers and students evidences a bleak future.

Liberation Education involves putting ourselves in the driver's seat and determining what is in the best interest of

our children; not leaving those decisions in the hands of radio station illustrators, insensitive Government, and/or Boards of Mis-Education. Our situation has been written, discussed and debated by the best--Carter G. Woodson, DuBois and many others--but we have failed to grasp and act in our best interest. Examples of academic excellence when we are in control has and is being demonstrated by the schools of The Council of Independent Black Institutions and others, i.e., Marcus Garvey and The Sheenway Schools in Los Angeles.

The High School class of the year 2000 will soon enter the First Grade. We must act for the sake of this new African-American generation with a Liberation Education that is culturally/extended-family based and controlled by African-Americans. Liberation Education is not based on nationalism, it is based on survival and entering the Twenty-First Century as a people and not a population.